

Beyond The Edge

A Newsletter for Woodworkers from The Lutherie

Volume 1 No. 1

Spring, 1987

NEWSLETTER IS BORN

For the past five years we have been regularly sending out announcements of our workshops and events. What started out to be a workshop flier, now includes alot more. We have decided, with this issue, to expand the newsletter to include: technical information on Japanese tools, shop tips, and announcements of sales on tools, exclusive to our subscribers. In his work as an instrument maker, Robert Meadow continually evolves techniques for improving the quality and efficiency of his work. He will share these insights each issue in the column "From the Bench of Robert Meadow". Future topics include using a sliding dovetail plane, sharpening for hardwood work, and plans for machine-sharpening jigs you can make out of wood and easily obtainable hardware. We will also include interviews with prominent professionals in the field. The cost of a subscription to *Beyond The Edge* will be \$10.00 for four issues.

This first issue is sent to you free. Hereafter, we will continue to send brief announcements of our workshops to our general mailing list via third class mail. Only subscribers will receive the workshop information via first class mail, as well as the useful and valuable information contained in *Beyond The Edge*.

It is our hope and intention to provide information that will repay the subscription price many times over in improvements to your woodworking environment.

You may use the form enclosed to subscribe. We welcome subscribers to send in your comments and questions. This can help us to build a valuable body of information.

Special Order Stones, And Some For The Kitchen Sink

Because natural stones can vary greatly in quality, we carefully screen our middle stones when we receive a shipment and divide them into low, medium and high quality grades. The large Akamonzen and Aoto (red and blue) stones

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Beyond The Edge is a quarterly publication of The Luthierie.

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2449 West Saugerties Road
Saugerties, NY 12477
USA

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Stones

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priced in our price list are medium quality. The lower quality stones are suggested for use with kitchen knives. We offer these for sale at \$14.00. The high quality stones (sometimes rare or absent in a given shipment) are for sale when available at \$10.00 above the listed price.

If you've been thinking about getting a really special middle or finish stone, this is a good time to order one. On our trip to Japan in May, we will be visiting the quarry where most of our stones are mined. The family who mine these stones have been good enough to put aside some especially large, high quality Aoto and Akamonzen for me to select from when I am there. The price of these stones will be \$60 and up, depending on size and quality. Another item which will only become more rare in the future is the Honyama stone. You can try a hundred Honyama and only find a few really good ones. I judge the stones on their quickness of cut, the fineness of grit and the

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Spring Workshops at The Luthierie

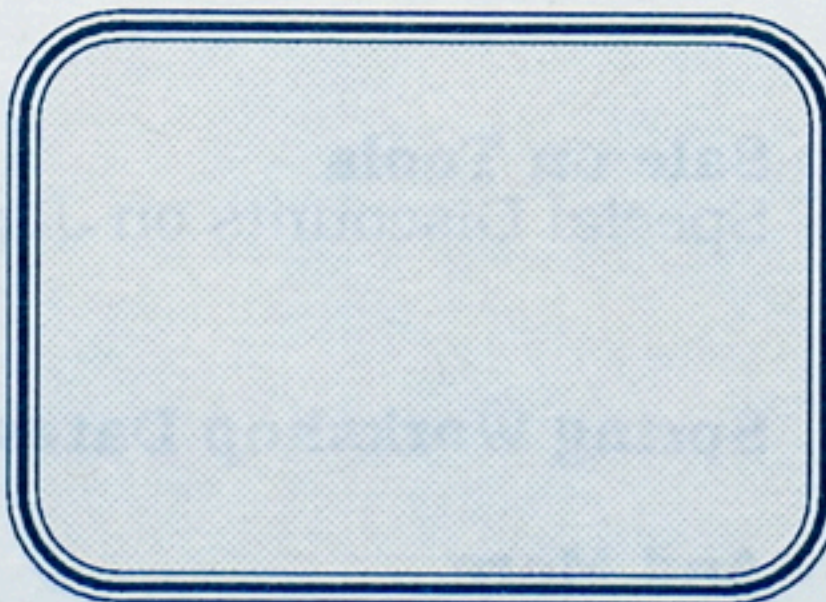
We have been very gratified by the many positive results of our workshops this year. It is always a pleasure to meet more of the people we communicate with over the years. New faces continue to arrive on the scene, while the familiar ones return. A number of people have come to several workshops in succession to complete screens, boxes, instrument repairs and small furniture projects. Even if one workshop is all you can fit into your schedule, alot can still be accomplished in a week-end. Depending on your own interests and level of experience, you might want to condition and sharpen a plane, make a tool box, or practice cutting joints. If there's something you've wanted to explore, here's the environment to do it in.

The dates for this Spring are:

March 7-8
March 28-29
April 11-12
April 25-26
May 30-31

The workshops are \$100 each for two days, including lunch. A deposit of \$30 is required. Please complete the form enclosed and send your deposit to:

The Luthierie
2449 West Saugerties Road
Saugerties, NY 12477



Meadow to Demo at Boston Area Show

Robert Meadow will be demonstrating woodworking techniques at the National Working With Wood Show to be held at the Sheraton Inn in Boxborough, Massachusetts from March 13-15, 1987. He will demonstrate the use of Japanese tools in cutting dovetail, mortise and tenon, and Japanese architectural joints. He will also be demonstrating how to finish plane figured hardwoods--a feat you won't want to miss!

There will also be a display booth where tools distributed by The Luthierie will be available to examine, try and purchase. There will be special discounts in effect during the show as well.

If you are in the Boston area, please come by and see us at the National Working With Wood Show. We look forward to meeting you there!

For more information, please contact:

J.D. Productions
467 Saratoga Avenue
Suite 110
San Jose, CA 95129
(408)973-0446

Stones *Cont'd from Col.1*

degree of structural imperfections. I will try out many fine stones in Japan and will select a few of the highest quality. The Honyama stones will range in price from \$400 and up. If you wish to order any of these special stones, please send a deposit in the amount of 50% of what you will spend for the stone. I will personally select the stone for you. If you are not satisfied with it when you get it, you can return it for a refund of your payment.



From The Bench of Robert Meadow

Ryu Brand

ERSC	50x80x.25mm	5.95
ERSC2	50x80x.45mm	6.80
ERSC3	110x70x.65mm	11.90
ERSC4	150x70x.65mm	15.30

Choosing a Saw

Choosing a Japanese saw can be confusing at first, but a little understanding of the elements involved can quickly clear things up. The first thing to know is that rip teeth are designed for cutting with the grain, while crosscut teeth are made for cutting across the grain, as the names would indicate. A ryoba saw has a set of rip teeth on one side and a set of crosscut teeth on the other. A dozuki, or a back saw has only one set of teeth, rip or crosscut. Dozukis are thinner, and give you more control. Ryobas, of course, can cut through thicker stock, having no backs.

I recommend using dozukis for cutting small stock, say 3/4" or smaller. Using these saws to cut larger stock, one tends to

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Tips on Saws and Scrapers

Sharpening Scrapers

Many people don't realize that what we do here, primarily, is make musical instruments: violins, violas, cellos, lutes, and guitars. In instrument making, scrapers are an essential tool. Thus we were motivated to find the best scrapers and figure out the best way to sharpen them.

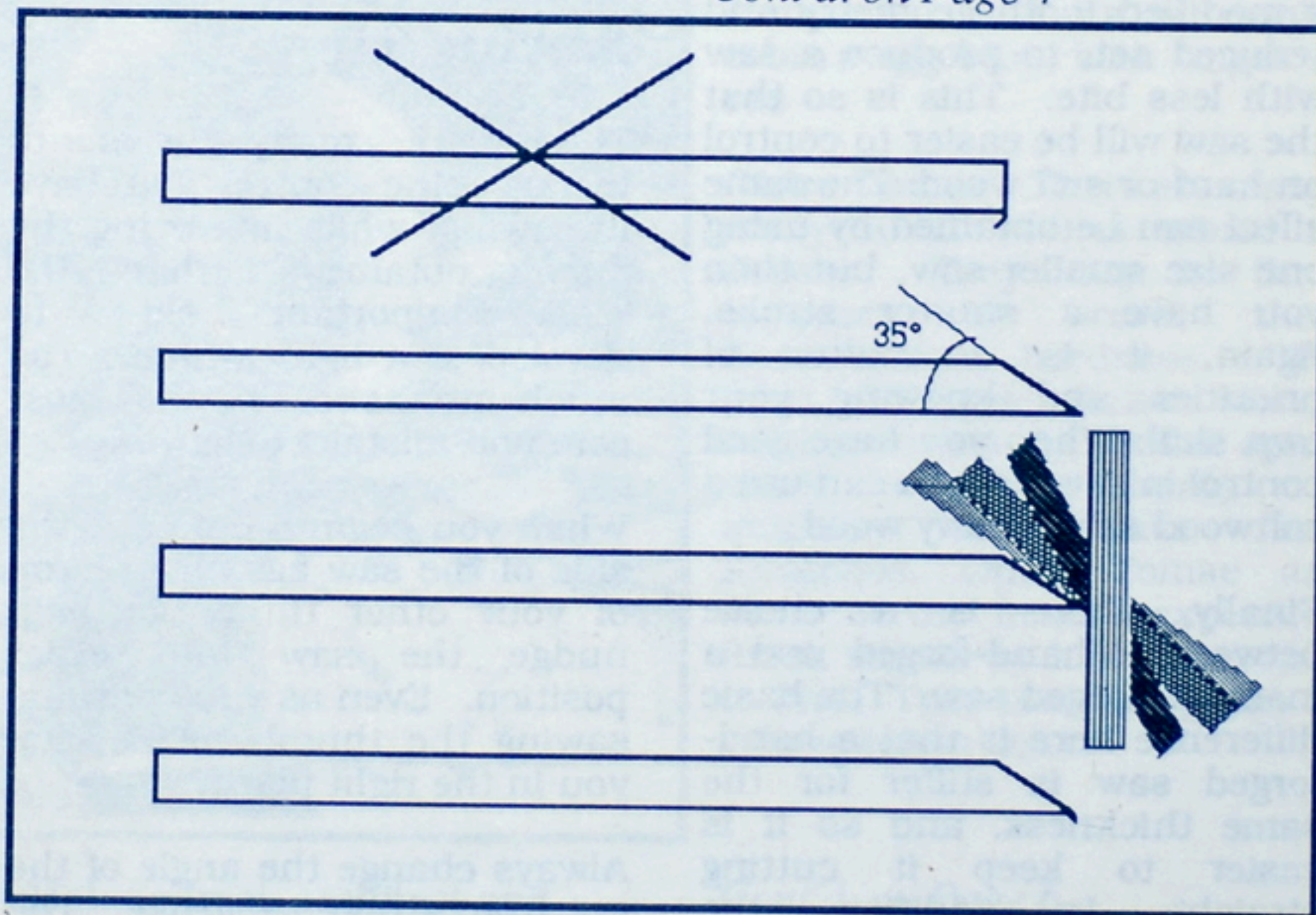
The first trick with a scraper, is to sharpen it to a knife edge (see drawings) rather than a square edge. Get it sharp enough to shave with. Then, a burnisher is used to bend the edge at an angle to the bevel. You continually change the angle of the burnisher, until the edge is bent over. Care should be taken, however, never to touch the edge itself. This will leave a ragged edge which will not cut smoothly. When the edge is razor sharp, the scraper can take very fine shavings.

Scrapers are traditionally made out of saw stock. Western saw stock is only hardened to a range of 48 to 52 on the Rockwell scale, because a saw that is pushed cannot be made any harder than this. Japanese saw stock, however, is hardened to 62 on the Rockwell scale. Plus the forging on this stock makes it more flexible than its Western counterpart. With this in mind, I asked Shindo-san, the President of the Shindo Saw Company, if his company could make scrapers for me. Although the

Japanese do not traditionally use scrapers, Shindo-san was willing to make the scrapers to my specifications. We carry four sizes of scrapers, in both the Taki and Ryu brand. The Ryu brand are hand-forged, which makes them stiffer than a machine forged scraper of the same hardness and thickness. Both brands are significantly stronger than conventional scrapers, and extremely flexible.

Taki Brand

ETSC1	50x80x.25mm	\$ 3.50
ETSC2	50x80x.45mm	4.00
ETSC3	110x70x.65mm	7.00
ETSC4	150x70x.65mm	9.00



Sharpening Scrapers: First sharpen to a knife edge. Then use a burnisher to bend the edge over.

Choosing a Saw

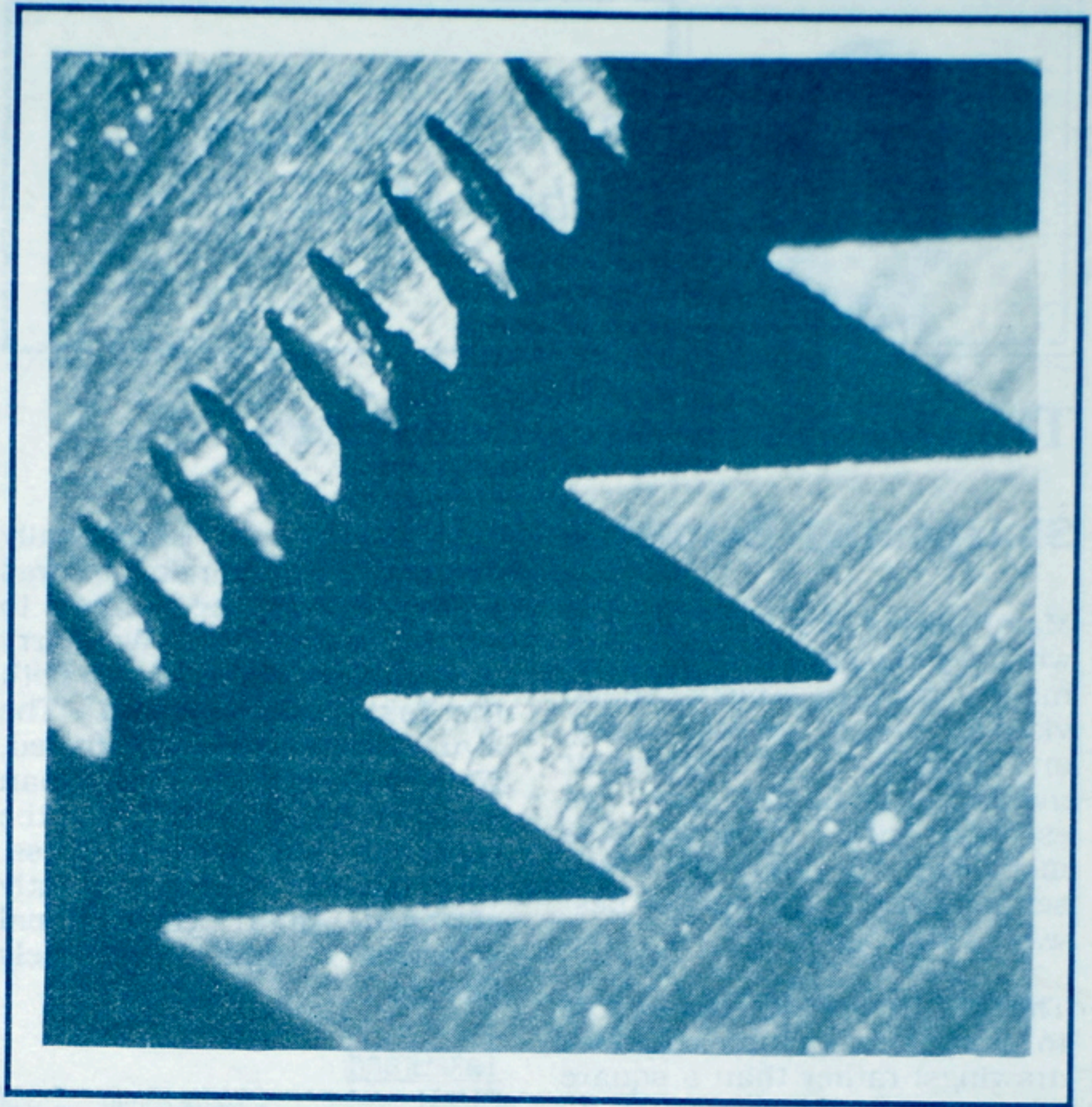
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push too hard which squeezes the teeth together. This will make the saw bind. The dozukis are also ideal for joinery. The rip dozuki makes the perfect dovetail saw, and can be used to cut the cheeks of a tenon. The crosscut dozuki is the tool for cutting shoulders of tenons, even on larger stock than 3/4". The thinness of the blade makes it penetrate into a broad surface easily.

Choosing the right size saw involves a balance between control and productivity. The smaller the saw, the finer the teeth and the more control you have. On the other hand, a larger saw will cut quicker because of its coarser teeth and will dull more slowly. But if you use a large saw for too small a job, it is hard to saw lightly enough to keep from splintering the wood. In general, I recommend 210 mm and 240 mm saws for furniture and instrument making and 270 mm and 300 mm saws for architectural work.

Hardwood saws are made with a modified tooth geometry and reduced set, to produce a saw with less bite. This is so that the saw will be easier to control on hard or soft wood. The same effect can be obtained by using one size smaller saw, but then you have a shorter stroke. Again, it is a matter of priorities and knowing your own skill. When you have good control in sawing, you can use a softwood saw for any wood.

Finally, there is a choice between a hand-forged and a machine-forged saw. The basic difference here is that a hand-forged saw is stiffer for the same thickness, and so it is easier to keep it cutting straight. In addition, the greater stiffness means that the saw will vibrate less during the



Top: Rip teeth. Bottom: Crosscut teeth.

cut. Energy is not wasted in excess vibration, so the saw cuts smoother and faster.

Sawing Tips

There are many ways to increase the control you have in sawing, while improving the results obtained. Perhaps the most important skill to develop is a light stroke. Too much pressure is the most common mistake in sawing.

When you begin a cut, rest the side of the saw against the top of your other thumb to help nudge the saw into exact position. Even as you continue sawing the thumb helps keep you in the right place.

Always change the angle of the cut from stroke to stroke. The saw will bite through the wood quicker if the teeth are

touching less wood with each stroke. When crosscutting a board, or cutting the shoulders of a tenon, first cut in a circular pattern all the way around the board. This is like scoring a piece of glass before breaking it; it defines the line you will be sawing.

In joinery, you generally want to saw the line in half so that the two pieces will fit together with equal pressure. If you want to increase the pressure in one part of the joint, leave more of the line there. Always saw towards yourself along the line. This keeps the saw taught.

Finally, hold the saw as far down the handle as possible. This gives you a straighter cut, since any side to side deviations in your motions will have a smaller effect than if you held the saw close to the blade.

Trip to Japan

We are still planning to lead a woodworkers' tour of Japan this May. The tour is almost full at this point, but a few places still remain. We will visit several historic buildings of great architectural significance to woodworkers, as well as a modern construction site and the Imai shrine made by Makoto Imai in Hida Takayama. Our tour will include the shops of many fine Japanese craftsmen: furniture and laquerware makers, as well as a maker of wooden combs. We have been invited to visit some very fine tool makers. We will be guided through the factory at the Shindo Saw Company, and we will be privileged to make our own knives at the shop of a Kyoto blade maker. More detailed information is available upon request.

The dates of the tour are **May 9-19, 1987**. The price of the tour is \$2850 from JFK, New York, and \$2620 from LAX Los Angeles or SFO San Fransisco, based on double occupancy. There is a single room supplement of \$232.00. If you wish further information, please contact us or our travel agent:

**GIDEON'S TOUR
SERVICES
1085 LAKE CHARLES
DRIVE
ROSWELL, GA 30075
(404) 642-8212
(800) 367-0893**

If you are interested in coming on the tour, we suggest you act immediately, as we expect to fill all available spaces very soon. We look forward to sharing a very special experience in Japan.

BURIED TREASURE Japanese Water Stones

Natural stones are mined from the earth. Each type of stone is unique to a particular area, and unique in its cutting characteristics. With the descriptions below, we hope you will be well armed to choose the right stones for your work.

Honyama - This is the most valuable of finish stones. No other stone mined in Japan has the fineness and quickness of cut, paired with the right elasticity to make it the perfect stone to sharpen for finish planing. Unfortunately, the Honiyama mine has been closed for 13 years. Stone merchants still have stock of Honiyama, but over the years, these stones have been picked over many times, leaving only the poorest quality Honiyama. A few good

stones may be left, but one has to try hundreds of stones to find these precious few. Many stone merchants and woodworkers are now selling used Honiyama, which are often of better quality than the virgin stock that still remains. One must also beware of stones sold as Honiyama which are some other type of finish stone. Product labelling is not as highly regulated in Japan as in the US, so the buyer must rely on his/her own expertise to judge the quality of the stone. An inked stamp on a stone does not mean very much either. Stones sold at stone merchants' shops in Japan are never stamped. The stamps are added on stones for export and those sold in Japanese Tool stores. They do not necessarily mean that the stone is virgin or that the stone is what the stamp says it is. A classic Honiyama is golden to gold-green in color.

Suita is another type of finish stone. Some of the best Suita rival many of the remaining Honiyama. A Suita is usually robin's egg blue, with tinges of red.

Ohira Tomae - There are many, many finish stones mined in Japan. They vary in their tendency to break, their fineness and hardness. The most desirable finish stones are those that do not fall apart easily, and are hard, cut quickly and leave fine scratches. Ohira Tomae are some of the best, inexpensive finish stones we have been able to find. They are dark green to gold-green in color.



Makoto Imai, architect and builder of the shrine we will visit in Hida Takayama.

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New Tools from The Luthierie

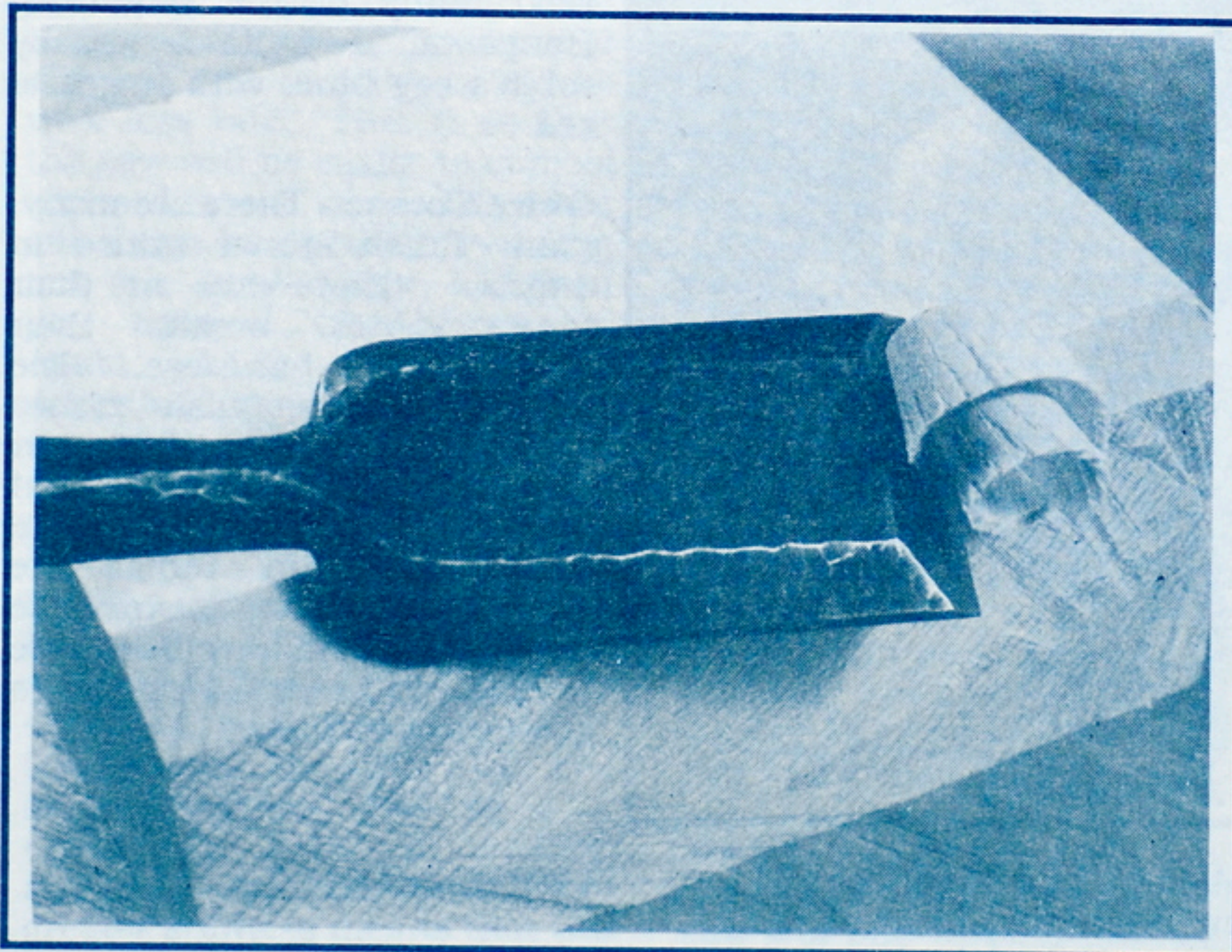
We have added a few items to our tool line-up that may be of interest to you. We introduced the **Hand Hammered** chisels in our catalog last year. These are special quality Kiku Hiromaru chisels—a brand which we have found superior to any other chisels that we have tried to date. What makes the Hand Hammered chisels special is that they are hand forged from start to finish. Traces of the hammering are left on the surface of the chisel, rather than being ground away. The additional forging these chisels receive makes them more flexible and chip-resistant. We now have slicks, timber slicks and timber chisels in stock in Hand Hammered quality. Supplies, however, are very limited at this time.

Another new item is the **1200 grit Deluxe Aquastone**. This is a useful stone because it cuts finer and wears less quickly than an equivalent King stone. Synthetic stones are made up of

rosin, clay and grit. The proportions of these elements will determine the properties of the stone. The Deluxe Aquastone has a high proportion of rosin and grit. This combination results in a stone that wears just fast enough to expose fresh, sharp particles. The steel wears faster than the stone, and the blade stays flatter as you sharpen. This speeds things up as you move on to the finer stones. They are a good buy at \$14.00.

We now have **Chino saws** in stock, in addition to our fine Taki and Ryu saws. The Chino is a low-priced saw, designed to suit someone who wants a low-risk way to try out Japanese saws, or for the professional who doesn't want to bring his/her good saws to a rugged job-site. We are really pleased with the quality we were able to get for the price.

Chino Cross-cut Dozuki		
240 mm		\$48.00
Chino Softwood Ryoba		
240 mm		\$46.00
Chino Softwood Ryoba		
300 mm		\$48.00



Hand Hammered chisel.

Buried Treasure

Cont'd from Page 5.

Aoto - This is a middle stone, used to eliminate the scratches left from shaping. Its softness allows the very edge of the blade to become polished and will produce a strong edge, less likely to chip. The Aoto, also known as the Mountain Blue stone (Ao means blue in Japanese), is an irregular dark blue-black color.

Akamonzen - Like the Aoto, the Akamonzen is a middle stone. It is usually somewhat coarser than an Aoto. It is particularly recommended for use on the bevels of chisels, which are most prone to chipping. The Akamonzen is an earthy reddish-brown stone (Aka means red in Japanese).

Tsushima is a very fine middle stone. It cuts slowly, and is very fragile and susceptible to changes in humidity. In some areas of Japan the Tsushima is used as a finish stone for sushi knives. Sometimes referred to as an Ocean Blue stone, this stone is a pure blue-black in color.

Tajima is a very hard middle stone. It retains its condition very well. We find its best use is with the mud of coarse or middle stones. The flatness and stability of the Tajima, combined with the mud from the softer stones, makes a great bridge between the coarse and finish stages in sharpening. The Tajima is aqua colored, with almost white flakes and black specks. Its pore structure is tight.

Binsui is another very hard stone, used in the same manner

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Special Savings on Tools

We will be presenting special offers on certain items from time to time. Subscribers will be eligible for these special savings which will be announced in each issue of *Beyond the Edge*. The following discounts are in effect until May 1, 1987 or as long as supplies last.

<u>Item</u>	<u>Reg. Price</u>	<u>Discount</u>	<u>Sale</u>
Tengu 10-set finish chisels	\$210.00	20%	168.00
Tengu Slick 36 mm Groove Plane 18 mm	25.00	20%	20.00
Groove Plane 21 mm	41.00	20%	32.80
Side Cutting Groove Plane-Right	41.40	20%	33.10
Side Cutting Groove Plane-Left	37.40	20%	29.90
Finish Stone TSY2 (8"x1"x1 1/2")	37.40	20%	29.90
	34.65	20%	27.75

Satisfying a Yen

If you've followed the news at all in the last year, you may have noticed the drastic plunge the dollar has taken, especially in relation to the Japanese Yen. We have held to our prices as long as we could bear it, even though the dollar has gone from 250¥ to 150¥ since September, 1985. Well, you guessed what we're leading up to, we will have to raise prices this year. But we thought we'd give you a chance to get some more orders in before we adjust our prices. Don't delay! The new prices will go into effect May 1, 1987. We will send out new price lists to those who have bought the catalog (\$3.00) and to *Beyond The Edge* subscribers. If you don't wish to subscribe, but want a new price list, just send the coupon enclosed or a simple post card request.

Buried Treasure

Cont'd. from Page 6

as the Tajima stone. Used in this way, with the mud of softer stones, the Binsui is a bridge between the coarse stones and other middle stones. Binsuis are off-white with brown specks; sometimes green streaks are found as well. The pores of this stone are large and open.

Shiromonzen - is a coarse stone, varying from 700 to 1000 grit. It cuts slower than a synthetic stone, but doesn't scratch as deeply. Shiro means white, which describes this stone's color.

Arato - This is a very coarse natural stone. The particles are not very sharp, so it is a slow cutting stone. The Arato stone is beige with orange swirls, and an open pore structure.

New Jersey Residents Must Pay Tax

The New York State Department of Taxation and Finance has made a reciprocal agreement with the New Jersey State Tax Department to collect Sales tax on goods shipped from New York to New Jersey and vice versa. Previous to this agreement, it was the responsibility of the purchaser to pay Use Tax on products bought from another state. However, this was nearly impossible to enforce and very little Use Tax was being paid on items shipped over state lines. The new agreement provides for New York State vendors to collect New Jersey tax on products shipped to that state. Although the program is voluntary, New York vendors have been cautioned that if they sell to New Jersey residents and do not participate in the program, they are likely to be audited and charged back taxes for sales to New Jersey for previous years.

Tax

Cont'd from Col. 2

The Luthierie is participating in the reciprocal tax collection program. For this reason, we ask that New Jersey residents include 6% Sales Tax with their orders. New York residents must pay 7% tax. If you are a professional in woodworking and will use your purchases for your business, they may be tax exempt. If this is the case, please enclose the proper form indicating your exempts status and your tax number.